

you would stick a classification on it so I couldn't say anything about it until Defense had cleared it; is that right?

Dr. SIMPSON. No, sir, we would not prohibit you from saying it; but, we would not put it out.

Let me say this, sir. One reason that this has some meaning to us is that NASA does not track Russian launches; we don't have any information of our own. Anything we hear from Russia is not necessarily to be believed, sir.

Mr. Moss. Mr. Reid?

NO COMMENT ON SOVIET SPACE FAILURES

Mr. REID. Dr. Simpson, could you comment to this subcommittee on Soviet space failures?

Dr. SIMPSON. No, sir.

Mr. REID. You are not in a position to comment this morning?

Dr. SIMPSON. No, sir.

Mr. REID. On Soviet space failures?

Dr. SIMPSON. No, sir.

Mr. REID. Let me ask you this. Are we to understand that, before a regularly constituted committee of the Congress, in light of the statute that the chairman has read, that Mr. Hardy and Mr. Meader have referred to, you are unable here this morning, on behalf of NASA, in public session, to make any comment, obviously of an unclassified character, of any sort, to this committee and to the American people on Soviet space failures?

Am I to understand, and are the American people to understand, that you are unable in any respect to comment on Soviet space failures?

Dr. SIMPSON. Well, no, sir. There have been failures. That is clearly known. I am not in a position, as you know, by the regulations that have been discussed here, to—

Mr. REID. If I may interject very clearly on that: What do you think the American people should know about Soviet space failures? Do you think they should be informed as to Soviet space failures?

Dr. SIMPSON. Sir, I don't have, in pursuit of my duties, any reason that I know of, in regard to the NASA space program, not to inform them. I am in the business of informing people.

However, as you well know, these are matters that are determined outside of NASA. I can't go beyond that.

Mr. REID. I am trying to indicate a broad question here, but I hope it is clear. Do you think the American people are entitled to information on Soviet space failures?

Dr. SIMPSON. Sir, in my job the presumption, the premise is that the American people are entitled to all information.

When their duly elected representatives in the Congress, and the people in the executive branch who are executing statutes passed by the Congress, classify certain information, then, as you know, that is another matter.

Mr. Moss. Dr. Simpson, I think Congressman Reid asked if you felt in a specific area the American people were entitled to the information.

Now, if you are under some restraint here because it is your conviction that this touches upon classified material, then I think you